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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Soviet Border Troops EM and Recruit Training

DATE OF INFORMATION PLACE ACQUIRED 

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

EM Training

1. The daily schedule for border troops was supposed to be: training, three hours; guard duty, eight hours; sleep, seven hours (uninterrupted); and meals, preparation for duty, political debates, and free time, six hours. However, due to a shortage of personnel in border units, EM spent 12 to 14 hours daily on guard duty. Three hours daily were devoted to political lectures, close order drill, PT and weapons training.
2. Battalion and detachment CO's tried to maintain a full T/O in order not to overwork their EM, but this was impossible. A company which had a T/O strength of 60-64 actually had an average of 40 men for duty, and at times only 25 men. A battalion of the 68th Border Guard Detachment had a T/O strength of 380 to 400 men. From 70 to 80 of these were in the hospital, stockade, or on TDY. An average of eight EM were attached to the district headquarters as medics or in some other capacity. Five to 10 men were also on TDY to detachment headquarters. Since the border had to be constantly guarded and fatigue details performed, unit CO's had no other choice than to put their men on a 12- to 14-hour guard workday.
3. Border troop EM could be sent on TDY to the following schools: a three-month radio course or a two-month dog handling course at MVD district headquarters; a one-month MG firing course, a 10- to 20-day tower observation course, or a one-month engineer and special electrical training course at detachment headquarters. Each company had a total of two or three EM attending such courses.

Recruit Training

4. Upon induction, EM assigned to border guard duty were sent from the "rayvoyenkomaty" direct to border detachments, which had special training battalions (uchelnyye punkty) where recruits received a

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three- to four-month basic course of instruction. These battalions were divided into three 100-man companies. A company was divided into three 30- to 35-man platoons, each of which had three 10- to 12-man squads.

5. Basic training consisted of the following subjects (number of hours unknown, except where given):

- a. Political orientation: four hours weekly on the history of the Communist Party, Stalinism, Leninism, Marxism, propaganda on benefits of the five-year plans, and the progress made in the USSR under the Communist Party.
- b. Weapons training: nomenclature and field stripping of rifles, carbines, PPSH, SMG's and Degtyarev LMG's. Target practice consisted of firing the carbine at a bulls-eye target 100 m. distant, at a bust or full length target 200 m. distant, and at a moving full length silhouette 300 m. distant. Three rounds were fired from each position. He knew nothing of the scoring method. Recruits also fired the PPSH SMG at 50 to 75 m. on moving and stationary bust silhouette targets, 10 rounds on the stationary and 15 rounds on the moving. As far as he knew, they never fired HMG's.
- c. Physical training: daily calisthenics using rifles with fixed bayonets and weekly running of the obstacle course. The course included jumping over a one-meter high fence, climbing a two-meter wall, crawling under barbed wire, jumping over ditches and hurdles, crossing a ditch by walking over a single log, which required good balance, and throwing dummy grenades at windows in a mock-up building. No weapons were fired on the course.
- d. Border guard duties: patrols, traps, ambushes, covering detachments, convoying troops, couriers, search groups, border picket details. CQ and sentinel duties /all of which are described in
- e. Engineer training: digging foxholes, trenches and camouflaging. To the best of his knowledge, no instruction on mines, booby traps and tank ditches was given.
- f. Medical lectures: VD and personal hygiene.
- g. Chemical lectures: Shlem-1 mask, and various gas capes, boots, coveralls, and gases.
- h. Topography training: map reading, use of compass, and terrain studies.

6. After completion of basic training, recruits were sent to a border battalion where they served for three years. Often this term was extended by two or three months.

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